



CALVIN COOLIDGE
SEATED IN CHAIR OF GOVERNOR BRADFORD OF THE PLYMOUTH COLONY
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The WORDS *of*
CALVIN COOLIDGE

Vice President Elect of the United States



*Spoken at Plymouth on the
occasion of the three-hundredth
anniversary of the landing
of the Pilgrims*

DECEMBER TWENTY ONE NINETEEN TWENTY



THREE centuries ago to-day the Pilgrims of the "Mayflower" made final landing at Plymouth Rock. They came not merely from the shores of the Old World. It will be in vain to search among recorded maps and history for their origin. They sailed up out of the infinite.

There was among them small trace of the vanities of life. They came undecked with orders of nobility. They were not children of fortune, but of tribulation. Persecution, not preference, brought them hither. But it was a persecution in which they found a stern satisfaction. They cared little for titles, still less for the goods of this earth, but for an idea they would die.

Measured by the standards of men of their time they were the humble of the earth. Measured by later accomplishments they were the mighty. In appearance weak and persecuted they came, rejected, despised, an insignificant band; in reality strong and independent, a mighty host, of whom the world was not worthy, destined to free mankind. No captain ever led his forces to such a conquest. Oblivious to rank, yet men trace to them their lineage as to a royal house.

Forces not ruled by man had laid their unwilling course. As they landed, a sentinel of Providence, humbler, nearer to nature

than themselves, welcomed them in their own tongue. They came seeking an abiding place only on earth, "but lifted up their eyes to heaven, their dearest country," says Governor Bradford, "where God hath prepared for them a city." On that abiding faith has been reared an empire magnificent beyond their dreams of paradise.

Amid the solitude they set up hearthstone and altar; the home and the church. With arms in their hands they wrung from the soil their bread. With arms they gathered in the congregation to worship Almighty God. But they were armed that, in peace, they might seek divine guidance in righteousness, not that they might prevail by force, but that they might do right though they perished.

What an increase, material and spiritual, three hundred years has brought that little company is known to all the earth. No like body ever cast so great an influence on human history. Civilization has made of their landing place a shrine. Unto the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has been intrusted the keeping of that shrine. To her has come the precious heritage. It will be kept as it was created, or it will perish, not with an earthly pride, but with a heavenly vision.

Plymouth Rock does not mark a beginning or an end. It marks a revelation of that which is without beginning and without

end, a purpose, shining through eternity with a resplendent light, undimmed even by the imperfections of men, and a response, an answering purpose, from those who, oblivious, disdainful of all else, sailed hither seeking only for an avenue for the immortal soul.

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